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University of Massachusetts Boston

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# The UMass/Boston Friday Report

Volume 1, Number 17  
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News and information about and for the  
Community from the Chancellor's Office

**Seven to Receive Honorary Degrees --** The University will honor seven distinguished men and women with honorary degrees during festivities celebrating the University's 23rd annual commencement. Five of the seven being honored will receive their degrees during commencement exercises at the Harbor Campus on May 31st. They are: • **D. Allan Bromley**, a nuclear physicist who is considered the father of modern heavy ion science. He is currently serving dual roles in the Bush administration as special assistant to the President for science and technology and as director of the Executive Office of Science and Technology Policy. • **Dr. Benjamin S. Carson**, an internationally respected neurosurgeon who has a scholarship program at UMass/Boston named after him. Carson, an African-American, was raised in a Detroit ghetto and overcame numerous barriers to become a prominent surgeon. He is director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital. • **Mildred Dresselhaus**, a physicist and electrical engineer who is one of 12 faculty members at MIT to hold the rank of institute professor. In 1985 she became the first woman ever at MIT to achieve that position. • **Gerda Lerner**, an historian and an early advocate for studying the history of the women's movement. Lerner is currently the Robinson-Edwards Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin, where she has undertaken an oral history project tracking the midwestern and multicultural origins of the women's movement. • **Robert H. Quinn**, a former member of the University of Massachusetts board of trustees and one-time speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Quinn was one of a group of three state lawmakers who co-sponsored legislation creating the Boston campus. The Quinn Administration Building is named after him. On May 26th at the convocation of the College of Management, the University will award an honorary degree to **Peter Lynch**, the guiding force behind Fidelity Investments' enormously profitable Magellan Fund. Lynch, now retired, is deeply involved in many charitable causes, including efforts to persuade Boston businesses to become more involved in supporting public education. The seventh honorary degree will be awarded on June 3rd at the graduation exercises of the UMass/Boston Gerontology Program. It will be given to **Sammy Cahn**, one of the most prolific and successful American songwriters of the 20th century and a four-time winner of the Oscar.

## Bay State Policies Penalize Working Single Mothers --

According to economists **Chris Tilley** of UMass Lowell and **Randy Abelda** of UMB, while most Massachusetts families benefited from the economic boom of the 1980s, single mothers and their children -- who started out with lower incomes than other families -- experienced only minimal income growth and fell even further behind other Bay State families. In their research report published by the McCormack Institute and titled *It'll Take More Than a Miracle: Income in Single Mother Families in Massachusetts 1979-1987*, Tilly and Abelda argue that current state and federal policies actually hinder rather than promote the ability of these families to improve their incomes and thus work their way out of poverty. Other significant findings of the research report: • Between 1979 and 1987, income in the state (adjusted for family size) grew by 22%; however the income of single mothers



during the same period dropped from 41% of the Commonwealth average to 37%.

- Even at the peak of the Massachusetts boom, almost half of single-mother families fell below the poverty line.
- Too little paid work is not the problem. Contrary to popular myth, single mothers, on average, worked the same number of hours per year as wives in two-parent families with children -- 900 hours annually.
- Single mothers have added earnings disadvantages compared to wives in two-parent families. The average education of single mothers falls behind that of wives by about two years; their average age falls about four years behind.
- The difference in hourly wages for a single mother with a 12th-grade education and one with 4 years of college is \$3.56, after controlling for other differences affecting earnings.
- Latino single mothers are at an extreme disadvantage in the marketplace as compared to their black or white counterparts. The authors suggest several policy changes in the area of earnings, child support and government transfers to help working single mothers better meet the needs of their families.

## **Dinner Celebrates Black Scholarship in New England -- Pamela**

**Ellis**, a Dartmouth College graduate currently working in the civil rights division at the Norfolk County district attorney's office, received the first Blackwell Fellowship in Social Science from UMass/Boston at a dinner last Wednesday. The second annual dinner, called a "Celebration of Black Scholarship in New England," also honored distinguished minority scholars from colleges and universities throughout New England. Proceeds from the event at the Four Seasons Hotel, attended by more than 160 people, will help fund the Blackwell Fellowship. It is named after **James E. Blackwell**, a retired UMB professor, and will be presented each year to a minority student who is an applicant for graduate study in the social sciences at UMass/Boston. Ellis, a Quincy resident, has pursued graduate study at Cornell University and will use the prize money to continue her studies in sociology. A former senior researcher at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, Ellis will have the opportunity at UMass/Boston to work on programs concerning the minority community that are developed in collaboration with the University's William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture. The principal speaker at the dinner was Professor **Charles V. Willie**, who is a leading scholar on minority issues. He teaches courses in education and urban studies at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. Black scholars honored at the dinner include: **Joshua Aisiku**, Worcester State College; **K. Anthony Appiah**, Harvard University; **Adeleke O. Atewologun**, Salem State College; **Henry A. Blackwell**, Boston College; **John Blassingame**, Yale University; **Leonard L. Brown**, Northeastern University; **Aida Bruns**, Bridgewater State College; **Dennis C. Dickerson**, Williams College; **Joan A. Francis**, Atlantic Union College; **Lina M. Fruzzetti**, Brown University; **Beverly Grier**, Clark University; **Michael S. Harper**, Brown University; **James Jennings**, director of UMB's Trotter Institute; **Toni Patricia Lester**, Babson College; **Shirley Malone-Fenner**, Wheelock College; **Michelle P. Murrain**, Hampshire College; **Victor U. Odafe**, University of Hartford; **Raymond H. Parks**, Suffolk University; **John M. Rice**, UMass-Dartmouth; **Wilbur C. Rich**, Wellesley College; **Janet G. Robinson**, Massachusetts Higher Education Coordinating Council; **Mahler Ryder**, Rhode Island School of Design (honored posthumously); **Thomas Freeman Slaughter, Jr.**, Bentley College; **Earl L. Stewart**, Berklee College of Music; **Travis J. Tatum**, Westfield State College; **Janie Ward**, Simmons College; **John Edgar Wideman**, University of Massachusetts at Amherst; and **James H. Williams, Jr.**, MIT. At the dinner, Chancellor **Sherry H. Penney** presented a certificate to **Charles F. Desmond**, vice chancellor for student affairs, in recognition of his leadership in inaugurating the annual celebration of black scholarship.